

THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN

flies and mosquitoes could be exterminated at one fell blow, and anti-larval ordinances be enforced in every home and in every home in the land, the death rate of the nation would be marvellously decreased that under the aegis of a living. A few years ago Dr. Edward A. Ayres, dean of the College of Medicine at the New York University, stated that 250,000 annually resulted from mosquito-borne diseases. Another authority has estimated that nine-tenths of all deaths caused from germs arising from the air and that every man with a communicable disease who spits in a public place is a murderer. This is putting the matter rather strongly, but since every man who gives his disease to many unsuspecting ones, and this disease often results in their deaths, the statement is not without its significance.

It was not until 1882 that tuberculosis was discovered to be a germ-borne and curable. Before that it was looked upon as absolutely fatal, whenever anyone was found to be afflicted with it the members of his family gave him up as lost. That it was curable in any climate, at any age, under conditions of poverty and in conditions of wealth, has been demonstrated. It is a disease of the lungs and its germ thrives in cold and damp air. So science, in battling it, wisely uses the very best and possible weapons of plenty—fresh air, fresh food, fresh air and sunlight while the afflicted ones are given every helpful advice. "Don't go out," this has in a great measure helped to decrease the national death with telling effect.

Food Poisons

Cent of All Diseases the Result of Undigested Putrefying Foods.

Of affairs, women of society and men with active brains are too sedentary in their habits, giving time to exercise. To this evil is that of high and irregular living, the result, the stomach cannot stand the demands made upon it. The food and overtaxed stomach does not properly do the work of digestion, taken in ferments and the poison enters the whole system. The body is in weight and becomes a prey for the attack of whatever disease it may.

It is ever occur to you how busy stomach of yours is? It only holds a pint, and in one year you force it to take in 2,400 pounds of material. It is ever occur to you how busy stomach of yours is? It only holds a pint, and in one year you force it to take in 2,400 pounds of material. It is ever occur to you how busy stomach of yours is? It only holds a pint, and in one year you force it to take in 2,400 pounds of material.

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where on a death-dealing mission, the average consumptive expelling seven billion germs every twenty-four hours. Each germ is capable of sowing the seed of disease in someone else. How the health departments of the nation, the State and the municipality are going to swathe the people to the gravity of this situation is a puzzling problem.

Associations to enlist the public in the prevention of tuberculosis have come into existence throughout the country. A good example of the work is found in that of the committee on the prevention of tuberculosis in government buildings. This committee has had rules printed and conspicuously posted in every government building, office and workshop. The first rule reads: "All government employees are positively forbidden to spit upon the floors." A number of simple instructions and warnings follow, and already an improvement is observed in the health, which will result in a noticeable change in the vital statistics of government employees. Such persons in the government employ who have tuberculosis are positively denied the use of the public cuspidors, and each must bring his own portable and destructible receptacle or use old handkerchiefs, bits of cloth or Japanese paper napkins, which he is in honor bound to destroy and so protect the lives of others from the disease which he has.

The first organized movement against tuberculosis in America was that led by Dr. Lawrence F. Flick of Philadelphia when the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis was founded in 1892. There are now two national societies for the prevention of the disease and fifteen State associations, including the District of Columbia. Many States have laws requiring the reporting of cases of tuberculosis, and leading cities and towns have taken radical steps in the same direction. This allows the authorities to provide for the segregation of such cases in hospitals, if possible, to provide proper food and care for those who cannot afford it, and to instruct members of the patient's family and his neighbors in the means for preventing the spread of the disease. Some of the best work in preventing the spread of tuberculosis and in effecting its cure is done by private benevolent bodies. The various associations, whether national or only small local bands, are making the most of first works that of instructing the public at large of the danger in infecting others by spitting on the streets, of the danger of using public drinking cups, and in interesting the masses in the enactment and enforcement of laws that will prevent tuberculosis.

When the government has reclaimed many thousands of acres of swamp lands it will not only have furnished home-lands for countless families, but will have protected the health of millions of people by abolishing the breeding ground of many mosquitoes. Dr. Ayres traces five diseases to the busy members of this family—malaria, yellow fever, beriberi, dengue and filia riasis. Dr. Reed and his army co-workers paid a great price for this knowledge of the mosquito's death-dealing propensities, but it was a knowledge that has already saved its tens of thousands. As a means of helping persons understand this and so protect themselves and their neighbors, the surgeon general of the public health and marine hospital service early prepared a set of facts about screening, all printed in clear type and in simplest terms, and these were sent to postmasters throughout the country to be placed in their offices in a conspicuous place for all to read.

A London physician has recently cast a great bomb into the circles of bridge players that game for some time, or at least, lead the players to observe more closely certain sanitary laws. "There is little doubt," says this learned surgeon, "that card parties are a frequent source of common colds, catarrh and influenza." He points out the fact that the rooms of the players are usually overheated and badly ventilated, rendering the occupants more susceptible to the micro-organisms which are in the atmosphere. These come most often from the packs of cards which are used in turn by various hostesses and are contaminated by their hands, their clothing, or by the saliva when the nervous dealer moistens her finger in her zeal to deal quickly. The surgeon suggests the invention of washable and sterilizable playing cards as a preventive measure against the alarming spread of colds and influenza among the society women who play.

An even greater bombshell than this is the one that the biological laboratory of the Department of Agriculture is now getting ready to hurl into the American consciousness. This will be the fact that the cat is one of the greatest carriers of disease, that it is responsible for the spread of tuberculosis, scarlet fever, smallpox and diphtheria, especially among children, and that its usefulness is far outweighed by its danger. The bureau is making careful inquiry into Tabby's case, and if the results continue to be such as have already been obtained, spinsterdom will suffer the loss of a comforter and many a child's heart be made sore with the bereavement of some beloved pet. The cat, and his accomplice, the flea, have already been written in the black books of the nation as transmitters of bubonic plague, though evidence so far is circumstantial, yet it is wise to be on the safe side when so great a matter as the protection of the public health is concerned.

Scarlet fever infection can be carried directly from the patient to one who touches him, but furniture, clothing and bedding have been known to catch the small dust particles or minute scales and hold them for years, to later transfer them to some person in just the condition to take the disease. It is a persistent poison, as was found in Detroit five years ago when the discovery was made that it came through the milk supply in one section, and even after the milk was made pure and non-infecting the disease was carried by the old milk tins formerly used. Many municipalities have laws on the subject of scarlet fever, smallpox and diphtheria, requiring the reporting and isolation of the case, prescribing methods of disinfecting, ordering the sterilization of every article used in the room, and suggesting the burning of all non-washable bedding and mattresses. Ignorance in these, as well as in most other cases, is responsible for the spread of diseases. A case recently cited by medical writers was that of a little child of the New York slums who was discovered in school one day removing bits of dead skin from her arms and generously passing them on to her classmates. An epidemic of scarlet fever was the result, the child's parents being too ignorant to know she was really ill of a contagious disease.

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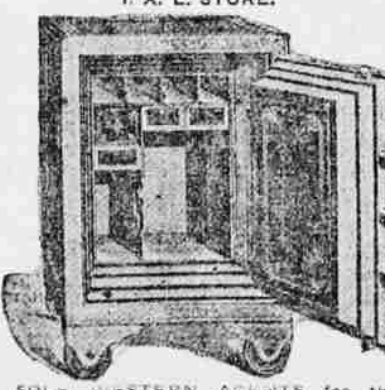
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